

VZCZCXRO8135
OO RUEHCHI RUEHCN RUEHDT RUEHHM
DE RUEHBK #1315/01 1530926
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
O 020926Z JUN 09
FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7165
INFO RUEHZS/ASSOCIATION OF SOUTHEAST ASIAN NATIONS PRIORITY
RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING PRIORITY 7093
RUEHBY/AMEMBASSY CANBERRA PRIORITY 9713
RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI PRIORITY 5624
RUEHUL/AMEMBASSY SEOUL PRIORITY 5533
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO PRIORITY 1652
RUEHWL/AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON PRIORITY 2691
RUEHCHI/AMCONSUL CHIANG MAI PRIORITY 6609
RHHMUNA/CDR USPACOM HONOLULU HI PRIORITY
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY
RUEKDIA/DIA WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BANGKOK 001315

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 06/02/2019

TAGS: [PREL](#) [PHUM](#) [PGOV](#) [TH](#) [BM](#)

SUBJECT: THAI SENATORS ASK GENERAL THAN SHWE TO RELEASE
AUNG SAN SUU KYI

BANGKOK 00001315 001.2 OF 002

Classified By: DCM James F. Entwistle, reason: 1.4 (d).

¶1. (SBU) Thirty Thai Senators, led by Bangkok Senator Rosana Tositrakul, signed a May 25 letter to the Burmese State Peace and Development Council (SPDC) Chairman Senior General Than Shwe, requesting that the GOB free Aung San Suu Kyi (ASSK) and create a better democratic environment in Burma. The thirty senators who signed the letter are a politically diverse group, including leaders of senatorial committees such as Foreign Relations, Political Development, Human Rights, Education, Public Health Committee Chairmen, and some, such as Rosana, who have a background in NGO work. Some of the 30 hold Senate seats by virtue of direct election, while others hold seats because of Senate Selection Committee action.

¶2. (SBU) Citing "the declining dignity" of Burma under Than Shwe, the letter underscored that the continued detention of ASSK has generated negative reactions among human rights advocates worldwide. The Senators cautioned the GOB by noting that human rights violations and political violence in Burma will have serious consequences. They stated that as a result of Burma's human rights violations and political violence, Thailand has had to shelter an influx of Burmese refugees.

¶3. (C) Comment: The RTG has often been reluctant to criticize Burma, and the few staunch critics of Burma in the ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Myanmar Caucus have never seemed to garner widespread support in the political class. The Senators' move is therefore a noteworthy departure from the norm. We intend to contact some of the Senators who signed the letter to encourage them to continue to speak out, and to cite this letter to others in the RTG as a positive example of Thai legislative sentiment toward democratic reform in Burma. End Comment.

¶4. (SBU) The original letter, which the Senators provided to the Burmese Embassy in Bangkok, was in Thai. The following is the text of the body of the letter, as translated by Senator Rosana's staff.

BEGIN TEXT:

Dear Chairman of State Peace and Development Council,

-In reference to the arrest and prosecution of Mrs. Aung San Suu Kyi on the charge of violation of house arrest by the Myanmar authorities on May 14, the incident has caused serious concern among the world community and ASEAN, including Thailand, regarding the issue of human rights and the political legitimacy of the Government of Myanmar under the leadership of your Excellency.

-Earlier, it was expected by people the world over who appreciate human rights that this pro-democracy leader of Myanmar will have her taste of freedom on May 27 after having spent 13 years under house arrest in her own home. This was despite the fact that her NLD party on the general election in 1990 by a landslide.

-Hence, it came as no surprise why any attempt by the Government of Myanmar to continue to curtail the freedom of Mrs. Aung San Suu Kyi has generated widespread reactions among aspirants for freedom and human rights advocates across the world.

-Your Excellency, please be aware that the Union of Myanmar is not alone, but has to co-exist with dignity within ASEAN. It is also a member of the United Nations. Human rights violations and political violence in Myanmar will cause serious consequences toward the world community which upholds the International Convention of Human Rights of the United Nations and especially toward the Kingdom of Thailand which has to bear the burden of sheltering refugees from Myanmar whose number is increasing due to the political violence in Myanmar.

-In our capacity as members of the Senate as shown in the attached name list, we wish to convey to Your Excellency our

BANGKOK 00001315 002.2 OF 002

concern for the declining dignity of the Government of Myanmar under your leadership in the eyes of the world community and your Thai friends.

-As a friend of Myanmar who appreciates the good relationship between the Kingdom of Thailand and the Union of Myanmar, we humbly appeal to Your Excellency to consider freeing Mrs. Aung San Suu Kyi, the opposition leader, very soon in order to restore the confidence toward the issue of human rights in the Government of Myanmar and to create a democratic atmosphere in Myanmar.

-Your Excellency's judgment in this regard will doubtlessly bring about political legitimacy and stability for the government under your leadership.

-We pray that Your Excellency will be willingly receptive to the friendly appeal of members of the Thai Senate who have faith that Your Excellency's leadership will pave the way for the dawning of human rights and democracy in the Union of Myanmar. Which will mark a new chapter in the political history of this region.

END TEXT.
JOHN